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Book Review: *Public Journalism 2.0: The Promise and Reality of a Citizen-Engaged Press*

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Public Journalism 2.0: The Promise and Reality of a Citizen-Engaged Press. Jack Rosenberry and Burton St. John III, Eds. New York: Routledge, 2010. 199 pp. \$45.95 pbk.

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Digital technology has changed journalism dramatically. Through a collection of research studies, essays, case studies, and interviews, *Public Journalism 2.0* takes a detailed look at evolving public journalism and where audience-generated stories fit into that evolution. The editors divide the book into three sections: the history of civic and citizen journalism, current practices, and future possibilities. They conclude with their views of where professionals fit in to a citizen-engaged press.

The book's strength is its diverse content from different authors, whose chapters give the book a rich mix of examples and perspectives. Although this also means different styles from chapter to chapter, the collection is tied together well. Summaries at the end of each chapter include bulleted lists of theoretical implications, practical implications, and reflection questions. Each major section also includes an interview offering insight from scholars on public journalism.

A common theme holds the book's diverse content together. The editors—Rosenberry teaches at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, and St. John teaches at Old Dominion in Norfolk, Virginia—detail how public journalism can build a citizenengaged press and improve public discourse. The book showcases many different roles for both amateur and professional journalists. Different approaches define news differently and include many views on journalists' gatekeeping functions. The picture *Public Journalism 2.0* paints is not all rosy, but it is realistic. In many cases, examples reinforce the difficulty in keeping people engaged in citizen journalism efforts. Many times, it is a struggle to keep volunteers involved or to obtain citizen contributions.

The book traces citizen journalism to the early 1990s. Although that may seem like recent history, it's a lifetime in terms of the changes that have taken place in journalism's digital age. The editors begin with a 1990 talk by James Batten, then-CEO of Knight-Ridder, at the University of Kansas. Batten's theme: "Newspapers that immerse themselves in the lives of their communities, large or small, have the best prospects for success in the years ahead." Just a decade later, the Internet had upended everything, as Davis "Buzz" Merritt, former editor of the *Wichita Eagle* and one of the pio-

neers of civic journalism, notes. "By the end of the century, few journalism organizations could indulge in the expense and risk of the experimentation that public journalism required," he says, concluding, "At some point, traditional newspapers will disappear."

The book's midsection captures contemporary citizen journalism, albeit recognizing that fast-changing technology makes assessments a moving target. It includes research by Serena Carpenter addressing whether citizen reporters produce quality journalism compared to traditional journalists. Her conclusion: Online citizen journalists do not produce the same quality of work as professionals when judged against traditional journalism standards. This section also includes three case studies documenting different approaches to citizen journalism. Although they each met varying degrees of success or failure, they all provide lessons for future efforts. Perhaps most interesting for a classroom is Kirsten Johnson's review of a citizen journalism website launched in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, in collaboration with students at Elizabethtown College. Although it faced many challenges—including getting citizens to participate—it also found success. The community, Johnson noted, benefited from hyperlocal stories produced by students, and students benefitted from the practical experience of producing multimedia stories.

The book's final section looks forward. Coeditor Rosenberry offers best practices for professional journalists working with citizen journalists. The section also includes another case study, showcasing the interactivity in the University of Wisconsin's Madison Commons model. This chapter in particular provides clear direction for others who are considering launching similar news sites. The idea of making posting easy and keeping training for citizen journalists simple is a useful lesson for future endeavors.

In the final chapter of the book, the coeditors hold out hope for a participatory structure that includes a role for professional journalists. Professionals are in the best position to collaborate in creating a well-informed, citizen-engaged press. Although rapid changes in both traditional and citizen-produced journalism are ongoing, *Public Journalism 2.0* provides a welcome freeze frame to help understand the process. The case studies, in particular, provide ample fodder for discussion and lessons for the future. The book should be required reading for students, faculty, professionals, and amateurs attempting to create new public journalism models.